



POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER  
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY  
PVC BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2007

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www.pvcnargs.org



CALENDAR

September 5, 2007 Behnke's Potomac MD location on River Road. 7 P.M. Larry Hurley on fall perennials; free "Gardener's Advantage" card; call Jim Dronenburg 301-834-6515

September 6, 2007 Alice Nicolson's home  
7:30 P.M. **Planning meeting** for EWSW 2009  
See article and directions below

September 22, 2007 Lynn Blei's home  
Our fall **Plant Exchange**. See the article below  
Coffee & donuts at 9:30 A.M.  
Plant exchange begins at 10 A.M.  
You must be a member to participate

October 7, 2007 US Botanic Garden Conservatory  
**Janis Ruksans** *Bulb Belt of the Former USSR*  
Coffee at 9:30 A.M., talk at 10 A.M.

November 3, 2007 Brookside Gardens  
**Members' Meeting**: slides et al.  
Coffee at 9 A.M., meeting 9:30 -12:30  
Powerpoint available

January 12, 2008 US Botanic Garden Conservatory  
**Allen Bush** of Jelitto Seeds "Hither and Yon, Louisville to Lijiang"  
Coffee 9:30 A.M. , talk at 10 A.M.

February 9, 2008 Brookside Gardens  
**Sasha Borkevec** "Growing Alpines in Washington, D.C."  
Coffee 9:30 A.M., talk at 10-12:30

March 14, 2009 US Botanic Garden Conservatory  
**Roy Klehm** of Klehm's Song Sparrow Nursery speaking on dwarf peonies.  
Coffee 9:30, talk at 10 A.M

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Note: in response to some recent requests, most of this edition of the PVC Bulletin has been printed in a larger type font and reformatted into two columns for easier reading. Also, this edition is being issued in PDF format. If you would like a BIG PRINT version, please do not hesitate to request one from the Editor: it will take only a minute or two to make the change.

Next deadline October 15, 2007

## **General Meeting**

Potomac Valley Chapter  
North American Rock Garden Society  
November 4, 2006

The meeting was brought to order at 10:15 A.M. at the Burke Library, Alexandria, Va. by President Alma Kasulaitis.

Election of new Officers was the focus of the meeting. Sue Hodapp, Elizabeth Grenfell and Alma Kasulaitis comprised the Nominating Committee. The Slate was: Paul Botting to complete the term of President Alma Kasulaitis and Jim Dronenburg to complete the term of Vice President Paul Botting. No other candidates were nominated. The Slate, as proposed, was voted upon and passed unanimously.

Member Peter Jones suggested that we consider holding our meetings at the newly refurbished Walter Reed Community Center, where he has been helping to beautify the grounds. On November 1, 2006, he donated to the Center and planted a twenty-five year old lace-leaf maple they he had grafted, nurtured and raised.

The program had members showing beautiful power point pictures of plants from around the world.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Alma Kasulaitis

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Potomac Valley Chapter of NARGS  
July 14, 2007

The Board of Directors of the Potomac Valley Chapter of NARGS was called to order by the president, Paul Botting, at 3:30 P.M. on Saturday, July 14, 2007, following the annual picnic at the home of Bobbie Lively-Diebold.

Board members present were: Paul Botting, Sandra Carlson, Margot Ellis, Alma Kasulaitis, Linda Keenan, Jim McKenney, Alice Nicolson and Betty Spar. Jo Banfield and Jim Dronenburg were unable to attend.

### Minutes

The minutes of February 10, 2007 were approved as submitted.

### Treasurer's Report

Margot Ellis reported that there is \$5,275.50 in the checking account as of 7/14/07 and a \$5,409.23 CD for a total of \$10,684.73. She added that there was a profit of \$1,073.46 from the Green Spring Plant Sale.

The expenses for the Green Spring Plant Sale were \$227.34. The Board discussed the desirability of owning tables and chairs to eliminate the expense of renting. It was moved and seconded that we investigate the cost of buying four 6-foot tables. The motion passed.

### Newsletter/Website

It was suggested that the *PVC Bulletin* be reformatted slightly to include two columns and increase the size of the type. Jim said he would be glad to do that.

### Membership

Linda Keenan reported that as of July 14, 2007, there are 101 members and that 42 2006 members have not renewed for 2007. She offered several outreach ideas to get new members, i.e. presentations on rock gardening to garden clubs; making use of the scholarships/subsidized memberships; outreach to horticulture programs and students; holding trough workshop. joining our local garden clubs and getting our gardens on the spring garden tours.

### Memorial

The memorial for George Phair has been established at Brookside Gardens. The donation amount of \$1,000 will be spent at Asiatica to provide Brookside Gardens with rare and interesting plants. They will be planted in the Gardens but they will not be recognized with a plaque. The Board expressed its appreciation to Dixie Hougen for her efforts to complete this memorial.

### Meetings

The meeting schedule for the remainder of 2007 and the early part of 2008 has been set as follows:

Oct. 7, 2007	Janis Ruksans, 9:30 A.M. place TBD
Nov. 3, 2007	Annual Meeting, place TBD
Jan. 12, 2008	Allen Bush of Jelitto Seeds, USBG, time TBA
Feb., 2008	Sasha Borkovec, Brookside Gardens, time TBA
Mar.15, 2008	Roy Klehm, USBG, time TBA

### Plant Exchange

The fall plant exchange will be on Saturday, September 22, 2007, at Jo Banfields. If she is unable to have it, it will be at the home of Paul and Maxine Botting.

### New Business

The Board considered the possibility of hosting an Eastern Winter Study Weekend in 2009. After much discussion, it was moved and seconded that the PVC tentatively accept the NARGS's request to host the EWSE, with or without the participation of the Mason-

Dixon Chapter, but that the final acceptance is contingent upon getting a hotel. The motion carried.

Alice Nicolson agreed to chair the Planning Committee which will meet at her house on Thursday, August 30, at 7:30 P.M.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Sandra Carlson  
Secretary

### **Deer Me and Other Garden Surprises**

On Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup> my wife was out in the gardens in Simpson Park when a woman who lives close by told her that she had seen a deer in the park a short time before. A man also saw it, she added. My wife searched for the deer in various bushy places along the west edge of the YMCA parking lot to no avail. A deer is not likely to be mistaken for any other animal that frequents the park, but our first reaction was shock tempered with some disbelief. "Where did it come from and how did it get there" we wondered. Although we haven't fully answered the questions, someone from our local civic association told us last night that it was not the first deer to be seen in our Del Ray neighborhood. She suggested that it had reached the area via the vegetation along the George Washington Parkway and then crossed the now largely empty, southern part of the former Potomac Yards.

What was even more shocking was my wife's discovery a few days later that one of the larger hostas in our back yard had been eaten off, as had some weedy violets. Surely they were eaten by the deer, she concluded, but I was reluctant to concede the point. On Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup> we had some visitors who live in the Maryland suburbs and knew what deer feeding looked like. At that time we noticed that some Japanese anemones had had some leaves and leaflets nipped off. Bambi was indeed the culprit, our visitor said.

A long time ago we belonged to the local hosta club. Our hosta fancy was short-lived, but I always remember the meetings when members would talk about problems with deer, how the deer always seemed to know which cultivars were the expensive ones (they tasted better?), and generally exchanged ideas about how to deal with the deer problem. We lived in our current house at the time, and somehow our problem of numerous slugs eating holes in the hosta leaves seemed insignificant by comparison. Perhaps because of our lack of deer we had to find another group to join.

At I write this on June 12, I have just learned that at least one other person, a neighbor who lives on the next block of our street, also saw the deer the first day. It was in his yard and then it headed up the street towards our house. I wonder whether a motorist might have seen him cross the street. Perhaps the deer should have headed for the salad bar in the nearby Giant supermarket, but he probably found our smorgasbord more appealing, and the lines were shorter. Surely in our gardens, it is not a matter of which plants the deer won't eat, but which ones they prefer.

The same person who told us that deer had been seen in our community before also mentioned that there were rabbits that were breeding along the former railway right-of-way that bisects part of Del Ray. That is not many blocks from Simpson Park, so perhaps it is only a matter of time before thoughts of bunny stew will start to fill our heads.

There must be a good side to having an occasional deer in one's garden, I suppose. When I lived in Kenya there was a large fire in my apartment building in Nairobi. I had been staying at a friend's house, and when I was alerted about the fire, I rushed down to the building to find firemen chasing flames that were shooting out of some windows. No one was allowed into the building. My apartment faced the inner courtyard of the building, so there was no way to assess the possible damage from outside. I had a couple of hours to think about what was really important, what was most valuable to me, and what I would have grabbed and carried out, had I been there when the fire started. But overall, I came away with a different attitude towards material possessions: they may be nice but they are also ephemeral.

A deer in your garden is like a fire in the house in the sense that it can cause major damage in a somewhat random fashion. Some of your favorite plants may be severely damaged or killed. Others may be totally bypassed. Perhaps the lesson to come away with is that one should not really get too attached to plants. In most cases we'll outlive them. Even many of the "permanent" trees and shrubs may be cut down when we leave the scene or scenery.

On a more positive note, there is a plant that I want to recommend, *Penstemon kunthii*. We got this red-flowered Mexican species under an alias, probably at a Green Spring sale, a number of years ago. It is a perfect summer-flowering plant if you give it full sun, good drainage and enough space. When happy it will readily grow to 3 feet tall and 4 feet wide, and although the shoots are erect or ascending, the ones around the perimeter of the plant will flop on everything that you let them.

When we first planted the larger sand bed on the Y with the then moderate sized yuccas and a plant of *P. kunthii*, it was the penstemon that we had to cut back, in order to keep the yuccas in full sun. Eventually, we cut it back once too often and lost it. The plant we have in our back yard, however, while equally a thug to its smaller neighbors is just so attractive for so long, that we usually try to truss it up, instead of cutting off the wayward shoots. The plant is in flower for a very long time. Its attractive foliage is semi-evergreen and we cut it back in the spring instead of the fall. The abundant flowers are visited by small bumblebees which can fit inside, so they do not have to make holes in the sides of the flowers in order to get the nectar. Although the plant produces numerous fruits, seedlings are relatively scarce, occurring mainly in nearby flower pots, rather than in the sand bed in which we grow the plant.

Perhaps the nicest feature of the plant is that it seems to peak in June, when most of the early species have stopped flowering and many of the other summer flowering species have yet to bloom. It will continue to flower for much of the summer.

Robert Faden  
The Expanding Garden

### The 2009 Eastern Winter Study Weekend

About 20% of our current membership are members of our parent organization NARGS. Those of you who are not yet members may be aware that NARGS sponsors three meetings each year - and eastern and a western winter study weekend and an annual meeting. Meetings are usually hosted by chapters, and PVC has hosted four during its existence. We hosted once in 1978, chaired by Jo Banfield, and again in 1982, chaired by the late John Wurdack. A more recent one was held here in 1991, chaired by George Phair. In 2002 we again hosted a meeting, chaired by Bob Faden. That meeting, at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church, was generally acclaimed to have been one of the best meetings in years, despite coming four months after 9/11. Why? Because we had a stellar roster of speakers; a well-thought-out program; a great group of vendors; and a wonderful selection of plants offered in the chapter plant sale, courtesy of Audrey Faden, Mike Bordelon, and a faithful crew of others who rooted cuttings, grew plants on, housed them through two winters and summers and prepared nice labels for them.

Times have changed in the last five years. Attendance at meetings has dropped steadily and recent meetings have lost money. The scale of our meeting will have to be reduced somewhat to reflect a smaller attendance. This

means we'll be trimming the number of more expensive overseas speakers in favor of domestic ones, cutting back on the freebies such as bags, flashlights and notepads, and making the Friday night dinner optional. Since we have only 18 months to do our planning, we will probably not have the same quantity of plants to offer, but we hope to have the same quality of speakers and vendors. We'll have to scramble to get things together, but I think it can be done.

We talked about doing this at the meeting during the summer picnic at the Diebolds', and agreed to give it a try. Success hinges on members who are willing to pitch in and do their bit. If everyone is able to do at least some part, we'll be able to pull this off. The list below shows some of the jobs and some people who have already agreed to chair committees. As you can see, there are a number of very important slots need to be filled. Many jobs can be broken down into smaller segments, so none should be a huge burden. We have experienced members to consult with, and some models to follow in organizing. Would you be willing to participate, if not as a chair, at least as a participant? Please let me know what you would like to do - I know that our members possess an array of skills that they might offer in some way, and here's a chance to be more than just a passive audience or a source of plants to the exchange. And who knows, you might even pick up some new skills (I learned how to do spreadsheets as a registrar last time!)

### JOBs for 2009 Eastern Winter Study Weekend

Chair	Alice Nicolson
Co-Chair	?
Registrar	Sue Hodapp
Co-Treasurer	Margot Ellis
Co-Treasurer	Elizabeth Grenfell
Speaker Liaison	Betty Spar, Alice Nicolson
Speaker Travel Arranger	Betty Spar
Vendor Coordinator	?
Hotel Liaison	Ed Spar
Catering Liaison	Bobbie Lively-Diebold
Audio-Visual	?
Publicity	[registration brochure, fliers, ad in NARGS Quarterly]
Web site	Paul Botting
After-Hours program	?
Program Booklet	[to be done at last moment]
Hospitality	?
Logo	?
<u>Fundraising</u> -	
Raffle Solicitor	?
Silent Auction	?
Raffle	?
<u>Plant Sale</u>	
Plants Co-Chair	?

Plants Co-Chair           ?  
 Plants                       ?  
 Plant Labels               ?  
 Table decorations         ?

We'll be holding an organizational meeting at my house on Thursday, September 6, at 7.30 pm. We hope to have news then about possible hotels and meeting dates in Jan-Feb 2009. We'll also get going on selecting a theme and possible speakers, and we also hope to fill lots of the vacant positions as well. Please come if you can.

Alice Nicolson  
 3435 8th St. S  
 Arlington, VA 22204  
 703-979-5871  
[taxonomy@verizon.net](mailto:taxonomy@verizon.net)

Park on the street or in the Methodist Church parking lot next door.

Some nice small pinks are turning up in local nurseries. Three which I have enjoyed this year are shown in this bulletin. To the left of the masthead is *Dianthus* 'Spangled Star', to the right is *D.* 'Siskin Clock'. Below is *D.* 'Eastern Star'. The beautifully patterned, fragrant flowers repay close examination.

Editor



### Plant exchange rules – a work in progress

The rules for the plant exchange came up for discussion in a flurry of emails among some members recently. Out of this came a new set of rules which will be posted on the chapter web site.

Editor

### Don Humphrey's "100 Good Rock Plants for Washington Gardens"

A copy of this list is now posted on the chapter web site: see the Articles page. Let's consider using this as the nucleus on which to build a longer list. Also, certain sorts of notes relating to this list might prove useful. For instance, it would be useful to know which members now grow these plants, if there are commercial sources for plants or seed and so on.

Editor

### Roundup

Paul Botting put together a short article on Roundup; it is posted on the chapter web site – see the Articles page.

### Some small *Dianthus*

### OUR FALL PLANT EXCHANGE

Our fall plant sale will be held on September 22, 2007 at the home of Lynn Blei, 8916 Burdette Road, Bethesda, MD. Burdette Road is the first cross street inside the Beltway on River Road. If you are coming from the Beltway, turn left onto Burdette. Go 8 speed bumps north on Burdette and look on the left for a light yellow house with maroon shutters. Park on the street; the circular driveway will be used for the plant exchange.

### *Start Growing Woodies for 2009!*

*We will need lots of small plants to sell at the 2009 Eastern Winter Study Weekend to avoid losing money on this meeting. Since the meeting will be scheduled for late January or early February, many will have to be started next year and held over in a greenhouse or jump-started in the winter. However, some evergreen woody plants can be started now and if hardy, require no greenhouse. So please start right away rooting cuttings of rock garden hardy evergreen woodies that can be successfully rooted in the late summer and fall. Start lots of them and let Alice know what you are doing.*

*Paul Botting*

*PVC Bulletin*  
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